

# **Final 2002 Report**

## **Missouri Domestic Violence Task Force**

**September 30, 2002**

**The prevention and reduction of domestic violence in the state of Missouri must engage the vision and commitment of leaders throughout state government. This priority effort requires identification and development of strategic plans to address domestic violence as an essential element of the mission of each department. The work required is extensive, but the benefits to the citizens of Missouri are life saving.**

# **Final Report of the Missouri Domestic Violence Task Force**

## **I. Summary Statement of Task Force mission**

Governor Bob Holden appointed the Missouri Domestic Violence Task Force in August 2001 to study solutions for domestic violence in Missouri. The Task Force was established by the Governor to focus on four specific tasks: 1) to conduct an inventory of state funding and resources dedicated to domestic violence; 2) to enhance public and private resources; 3) to investigate opportunities to expand domestic violence prevention and intervention services; and 4) to work toward the development of a coordinated and integrated strategic action plan that will advance the needs, policies, and priorities set by the Task Force. The mission of the Task Force was delineated in Governor Holden's Executive Order 01-13 (attached).

## **II. Findings of the Task Force**

### **A. Summary**

It is the finding of the Missouri Domestic Violence Task Force that a long-term commitment by those in the highest levels of authority within every department of Missouri government is required to address domestic violence through a strategic and integrated action plan. To date, there has been no such plan developed to comprehensively focus on domestic violence prevention and services throughout Missouri government. Therefore, it is the recommendation of the Task Force that state government in Missouri must prioritize efforts to incorporate domestic violence prevention, education, screening and services as an integral aspect of its public services.

There is a role for state government, working in concert to augment the efforts and expertise within communities and existing advocacy services, to inform the public of the reality of domestic violence and to increase the resources to reduce the occurrence and impact of the violence.

The genesis of a government-wide systemic response to domestic violence is the recognition by the leadership of each department that their existing missions and responsibilities include opportunities to address and prevent domestic violence.

This requires a commitment to undertake the ongoing analysis, policy development, and action within each department to identify its role in a statewide collaboration to end the violence.

#### **B. Strategic Goals of a Systemic Commitment to Reducing Domestic Violence in Missouri**

In 2002, Governor Bob Holden directed every state department to develop strategic goals and priorities within the larger framework of his vision for Missouri as detailed in the document, “Managing for Results.” The Task Force recommends that those “Managing for Results” strategic plans identify and incorporate goals and outcomes to prevent and reduce domestic violence in Missouri. These plans for addressing domestic violence should include specific evaluation components to track and demonstrate the departments’ effectiveness in achieving individual, community and institutional change.

The Task Force recognizes that despite the limitations of current state budget constraints, action can be taken to implement long-term goals to address domestic violence through state government. The outcomes sought through such concerted effort will not be attained immediately, but the process of moving toward them will produce tangible results that will increase the safety and well being of Missouri families.

The Task Force recommends that the following approach be adopted to guide these statewide efforts.

1. The Task Force asks that Governor Holden renew the appointment of the Missouri Domestic Violence Task Force to continue working as the body providing coordination, technical assistance and evaluation of domestic violence prevention and response efforts undertaken within each state department;
2. Department directors, at the direction of the Governor, will be responsible for initiating approaches to address domestic violence through existing departmental responsibilities and strategic plans;

3. Department directors will identify leaders within divisions and public service arenas who will commence the internal tasks of identifying immediate and long-term policy and programmatic opportunities to address domestic violence within their departments;
4. The Task Force will reorganize itself to include seven subcommittees focused on the elements of the strategic framework for addressing domestic violence in Missouri. These are: Prevention and Public Awareness; Services to Victims and Community Collaboration; Education and Training; Screening and Early Identification; Health Care; Offender Accountability; and Economic and Business Impact.

**C. Framework to Guide a Statewide Domestic Violence Strategic Plan**

The past twenty-five years of work to address domestic violence throughout the United States has led to significant changes in responses to the violence by both government and private, community-based services. These changes have occurred within law enforcement, court systems, community-based services, public and higher education, prevention efforts, health care, businesses, and a wide array of other services and systems that have been involved in reducing domestic violence.

This work has identified common, successful ways by which public and private efforts can combine to prevent and reduce domestic violence. It is upon this foundation that the Task Force recommends that a framework be built throughout Missouri state government to reduce the impact and occurrence of domestic violence.

The Task Force recommends the following framework of essential elements be adopted as the guiding focus areas to implement a strategic domestic violence response and action plan throughout state government. These topics are the basic elements of prevention and intervention identified by the Task Force for each state department to include in its strategic plan, and in its programs and services. These areas of focus, with preliminary long-term goals identified by the Task Force, include:

### **1. Prevention and Public Awareness**

Missouri's current domestic violence prevention and public awareness efforts are primarily occurring within individual communities, many of which are funded by federal and state grants. Non-profit domestic violence programs presented domestic violence education programs to more than 103,000 Missourians during 2001.<sup>1</sup> The Task Force has prioritized the need to reach even more citizens with information about domestic violence to advance statewide violence prevention, public awareness and to thereby increase victims' safety and access to services.

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<sup>1</sup> Missouri Coalition Against Domestic Violence *2001 Service Statistics*, published 5/9/02.

The Task Force recommends that state departments become partners in augmenting these messages about domestic violence to achieve the following goals:

- Domestic violence prevention education will reduce the occurrence of adolescent dating violence and adult intimate partner violence;
- All state offices will increase victims' access to advocacy services through providing information on available services and the rights of all victims of domestic violence to gain assistance through the civil and criminal justice systems.
- A statewide public education campaign will provide a consistent message to Missourians about the prevention of domestic violence, the resources for victims and the consequences for offenders.

## **2. Services to Victims and Community Collaborations**

Services for victims of domestic violence in Missouri have grown significantly during the past ten years, as have the collaborations between these community-based services and governmental agencies. However, there are still more than half of Missouri's counties that, in 2002, do not have services of safe shelter, crisis intervention, legal advocacy and other assistance for victims of domestic violence within their borders.

During 2001, 5,185 battered women and 5,575 of their children received safe shelter and support services through domestic violence shelters; more than 4,500 were turned away from shelters that were filled to capacity.<sup>2</sup> Non-residential domestic violence programs and shelters reported increases in advocacy services provided during 2001, when 14,480 women, 3,538 children and 317 men were assisted.<sup>3</sup> Since 1996, Missouri law enforcement agencies reports reflect a yearly average of 42,000 incidents of domestic violence.<sup>4</sup> Many other organizations, public services and governmental systems respond and work cooperatively to meet the increasing need for domestic violence response. The Task Force recommends that departments within state government work within the services they provide and/or oversee to enhance the networks of safety for victims of domestic violence to achieve the following goals:

- Community-based efforts to provide services to victims of domestic violence will be expanded through new partnerships with state programs that provide prevention education and essential services to families;
- State government grants and contracts for community-based domestic violence services for adult victims and their children will be structured according to specific plans to enhance the effectiveness of limited resources, to coordinate funding application systems, and identify effective approaches through outcome measures of victim safety;

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<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

<sup>4</sup> *Missouri Crime Summary*, Missouri Department of Public Safety, 1996-2000.



- Drug and alcohol treatment programs will institute treatment responses to address the specialized safety and recovery needs of victims of domestic violence with drug and alcohol dependencies;
- Increased legal resources for impoverished victims of domestic violence will improve the ability of victims of domestic violence to gain access to the civil justice system to protect themselves and their children from ongoing violence;
- Crime victim compensation will be made more accessible through reducing barriers to domestic violence crime victims' obtaining financial recompense.

### **3. Education and Training**

Law enforcement officers and non-judicial court personnel are the sole professionals in the state of Missouri who are required by state law to receive domestic violence education and training. The Task Force, therefore, has identified a tremendous opportunity to address domestic violence through the education and training of Missouri state government employees, as well as private sector professionals under contract with the state to provide services to families.

An example studied by the Task Force is the successful training model within the Missouri Division of Family Services (DFS). This training program has been in effect for three years. It has been institutionalized as part of the basic

orientation training for DFS employees. The goals of the training program are to improve public and private agency cooperation in meeting the needs of domestic violence victims, to educate staff to conduct domestic violence screening and early identification, and to establish governmental policies and procedures to more effectively meet the needs of victims of domestic violence. The Task Force has determined that efforts similar to this model, or other specific domestic violence education efforts, can help Missouri achieve the following goals:

- Training of all state employees and contracted providers who provide services to Missouri families will allow the implementation of best practices to provide safety and services for victims and consistent accountability for domestic violence offenders;
- The mental health impact of domestic violence will be reduced through implementation of education for providers in screening, therapeutic responses and intervention with domestic violence victims;
- Educational institutions will incorporate information about domestic violence in professional curricula—such as for human and health services, law schools, etc—to develop inter-disciplinary common knowledge of the nature and dynamics of domestic violence, best practices in response to victims, and to underscore the necessity of holding batterers accountable for their violence.

#### **4. Screening and Early Identification**

It has long been a standard among health care providers to prevent and address common threats to health by asking questions—known as “screening”—to identify those at risk of harm. This screening and early identification approach has been proven as an effective means to identify and assist victims of domestic violence, and to provide those at risk of violence with the information and resources needed to prevent domestic violence from occurring in their lives. The Task Force identified state government departments’ staff and contracted organizations as an invaluable resource to prevent the escalating harm of domestic violence. The Task Force recommends state departments develop plans to adopt domestic violence screening and early identification in all of its services to Missouri families in order to meet the following goals:

- Identification of victims of domestic violence through universal screening by all state government programs and contractors providing services to families will reduce the escalation of the violence, provide early intervention and service referrals to enhance victims’ safety;
- A programmatic and policy focus on the nexus between child maltreatment and intimate partner violence will result in greater safety for children and their abused parents through screening and early identification of families affected by the co-occurrence of abuse.

## **5. Health Care**

Domestic violence is a threat to the health of Missouri's citizens. The Task Force, the American Medical Association and the Missouri Department of Health and Senior Services all have identified domestic violence as a health and public health issue and have outlined an important role for health care providers and public health workers in preventing domestic violence, as well as in early identification and intervention. Therefore, the Task Force recommends that the following goals be accomplished:

- The risks to the health of Missouri families resulting from domestic violence will be reduced through a systemic response by all health care providers to prevent, identify and respond to domestic violence as a health care issue;
- Victims of domestic violence will have increased access to intervention services through health care systems and providers serving as a primary source of information and referrals for assistance.

## **6. Offender Accountability**

Those who commit domestic violence crimes are among those most likely to commit additional crimes—against the same victim or to repeat their patterns with others. Currently, however, there are no standards in Missouri for intervention services or rehabilitation programs for these batterers, no consistent policies to guide probation and parole supervision of domestic

violence offenders, and limited administrative policies to identify offenders who pose ongoing risks to their victims—including their own children. The Task Force identified the need for a focus on offender accountability as a component of the following goals to prevent and reduce domestic violence:

- Law enforcement responses to domestic violence will be enhanced through ongoing training requirements for all officers in domestic violence response, investigations, separate interview strategies specifically for victims and for offenders, and evidence collection to increase successful prosecutions of offenders;
- Correctional institutions and the Division of Probation and Parole will screen offenders for domestic violence issues to determine appropriate intervention and treatment. Compliance with all court and board orders will be monitored and sanctions recommended to ensure safety for victims. Domestic violence prevention, assessment, and treatment issues within the Department of Corrections also will be referred to the department's existing Transition from Prison to Community Initiative;
- The child protection system will be enhanced to provide protection for abused children and their non-abusing parents through interventions and services that provide safety for victims and hold batterers accountable for their actions;

- Statewide standards will be developed for batterer intervention and accountability programs to reduce the reoccurrence of domestic violence and to enhance victim safety as an aspect of community-wide domestic violence responses;
- Because of the high correlation between substance abuse and violence, all offender assessments conducted for drug courts will include screening for domestic violence, including pre-sentence evaluations. Drug court and probation personnel will receive training to conduct effective screening for domestic violence among persons charged with drug-related crimes.

## **7. Economic and Business Impact**

Domestic violence is costly for businesses and the economic viability of both state government and the private sector. The economic consequences of domestic violence are found in employee absenteeism, workplace violence, and losses in business productivity. Welfare to work programs, job training and other economic development programs report domestic violence as a key factor that inhibits employee job readiness and retention. The Task Force recommends that Missouri state government departments develop workplace safety policies, procedures and programs for employees who may be victims of domestic violence as models for private sector businesses and employers. These models will further efforts to achieve the following goals:

- Businesses will be assisted in developing responses to domestic violence in the workplace to safeguard the safety of employees and reduce the negative economic impact of violence on the businesses and workforce of Missouri;
- Model human resources management policies and procedures developed within state departments will be used to assist businesses and private sector employers develop their own workplace safety measures. These policies will assist employers' responses to employees who are victims of domestic violence and to implement appropriate policies for employees who have committed domestic violence offenses.
- State temporary public assistance and self-sufficiency programs will support the transitional efforts of impoverished victims of domestic violence to successfully gain and keep employment.

### **III. Findings by Specific Task Force Mission Areas**

#### **A. Conduct An Inventory of State Funding and Resources Dedicated to Domestic Violence**

The Task Force published the results of its inventory of domestic violence funding and resources in its *Preliminary Report* in December 2001. A copy of that report is attached. Since that report, Governor Holden approved a budget for fiscal year 2003 that increased state general revenue funding for domestic violence services through grants administered by the Department of Social Services, Division of Family Services (DFS). This funding increased by

\$500,000 for a total of \$4.2 million. Federal funding, also administered through DFS, increased by \$300,000 for a total of \$1.6 million.

The recommendations of the Task Force are made with the understanding that approaches to systemically addressing domestic violence through all of state government will require incremental progress.

**B. Investigate Opportunities to Enhance Public and Private Resources**

The Task Force was able to broadly identify areas in which state departments can incorporate efforts to address domestic violence through existing programs and services. Time constraints and the human resource limitations of the Task Force did not allow for a complete investigation and compilation of identified opportunities to enhance resources. The Task Force recommendation to institute ongoing efforts led within each state department will more realistically allow progress toward the goal of enhancing resources. This effort requires analysis and strategic planning to identify ways to incorporate domestic violence training, prevention efforts, education, screening and services through existing state programs, services and interventions with Missouri families.



**C. Investigate opportunities to expand domestic violence prevention and intervention services**

The recommendations of the Task Force are predicated on the recognition that the work to prevent domestic violence requires a coordinated, diverse and fully integrated public prevention education effort throughout Missouri. The educational systems within Missouri, public health and health care systems, social services and mental health systems all are natural sources of information for Missourians at risk of harm.

Opportunities exist within a broad range of Missouri government programs, divisions, and agencies to provide crucially necessary prevention information to reduce the occurrence of domestic violence. These opportunities must be developed in a coordinated fashion to ensure that Missourians of all ages know of the realities of domestic violence, the resources to assist victims, and the unavoidable consequences to those who commit violence.

State government can more fully engage in partnerships with communities and private services throughout Missouri to achieve the goal of ending the violence as an outcome of concerted efforts to prevent it from occurring.

**D. Work toward the development of a coordinated and integrated strategic action plan that will advance the needs, policies, and priorities set by the Task Force**

The strategic goals identified by the Task Force can only be accomplished through the expansion of efforts to address domestic violence through all levels and departments of state government. These goals cannot be realized if they remain the “policies set by the Task Force.”

The prevention and reduction of domestic violence in the state of Missouri must engage the vision and commitment of leaders throughout state government. This priority effort requires identification and development of strategic plans to address domestic violence as an essential element of the mission of each department. The work required is extensive, but the benefits to the citizens of Missouri are life saving.